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SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

The second breeding record of the Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath* in Somalia

The Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath* has been described as rather uncommon but widespread in Somalia with only one breeding record, from the extreme northwest (Ash & Miskell 1983).

An example of this species was seen on 19 August 1989 on the Shabeelle river some 3 km downstream from Aw Dheegle village (1°57N, 44°50E) perching in a nest together with one half-grown young bird. The solitary, flat, platform-like nest was constructed from dry branches; it was about 1 m in diameter and about 20 m above the water level in a large tree on the edge of the river. The well-feathered young bird was brownish-grey, about half the size of the parent, and apparently still nest-bound. Its age was estimated as five to six weeks.

Brown *et al.* (1982) state that *A. goliath* lays mainly during the rains and give laying dates for Somalia as September to December; they were evidently aware of Somalia breeding records unavailable to Ash & Miskell.

An attempt is made here to relate the present breeding record to precipitation in the area. In general, the north and south movement of the intertropical convergence zone, with its associated intertropical front and wind patterns, is the major event which shapes the climate of Somalia. Precipitation fluctuates from year to year and from area to area along the coastal land between the Shabeelle and the Jubba rivers. There are two rainy seasons—the *Gu* season is the longer one, lasting from April to June, while the *Deyr* season is the shorter and less reliable, from October to mid December.

Rainfall data for the first nine months of 1989 at stations nearest to the heron's nest are given in Table 1.

The data show that rainfall in central and southern Somalia occurs in pseudo-random showers of relatively small dimensions. On a daily basis there is thus a marked spatial variability, and rains may be intense over limited areas, which would explain the variation between the two locations in Table 1. The listed rainfall figures were recorded

Table 1. *Rainfall (mm) at two sites in Somalia in 1989*

	Afgooye[1]			Jenaale[2]		
	1989	normal	% of normal	1989	normal	% of normal
Jan	0.0	2.7	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0
Feb	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
Mar	22.6	7.6	297.4	0.0	5.7	0.0
Apr	57.2	87.8	65.1	78.2	109.9	71.2
May	154.1	92.9	165.9	51.1	82.3	62.1
Jun	77.9	57.6	135.2	95.9	78.1	122.8
Jul	9.4	53.8	17.5	21.9	61.3	35.7
Aug	8.7	22.9	38.0	17.6	48.4	36.4
Sep	34.3	11.9	288.2	22.2	18.3	121.3

[1] 38 km NE of Aw Dheegle
[2] 24 km SW of Aw Dheegle

at the two meteorological stations nearest to the Goliath Heron observation point. They relate monthly precipitations from January to September 1989 to the normal pattern of the *Gu* season, which is the main, and more reliable, of the two rainy periods. These data seem to indicate that breeding in this case could have been triggered by the peak rains in May–June, especially since they were rather copious in 1989, thus supporting the assumption that laying would normally occur during the rainy season.

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Fruit-eating sunbirds

While visiting Kokota Island (6°17S, 39°10E), an islet on the western side of Pemba, Tanzania, five of the endemic Pemba Sunbirds *Nectarinia pembae* were observed feeding in an unusual fashion. Early in the afternoon of 7 February 1993, four male and one female *N. pembae* were seen feeding actively in a fruiting *Flueggia virosa* shrub. At first it was assumed that the birds were searching for small insects amongst the foliage and fruit, however, closer observation with 10 x 40 binoculars at under 15 m range proved otherwise. The birds jabbed at the small creamy-white berries, extracted small segments which were then swallowed. Smaller berries were plucked and ingested whole. The sunbirds appeared to be unconcerned at our presence—ISCP had ap-